

**Pain to Pride: A Visual Journey of African American Life in 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Richmond, VA**

**By Rodney Robinson**

**Rationale**

History education in this country lags far behind the other subjects because of the old and archaic methods a lot of history teachers are still using. A lot of history teachers still use lecture as the main teaching method. The National Training Laboratories report that after two weeks, students only remember 5% of what they learned through the lecture method. More importantly, lecture creates an environment that is incredibly boring to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. 21<sup>st</sup> century learners are the technological generation. They have access to a huge range of videos, information, and all of the social networking that technology has created. It's hard for that type of learner to be involved in mainly lecture methodologies.

Another problem with history education today is the reliance on textbooks. Textbooks are tools of information that force opinions and ideas about the past that are mainly at the author's discretion. This does not allow the student to learn any critical thinking or problem solving skills that are very important to the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. This once again leads to a generation of history students who are uninterested in history class. The unit I am planning is going to be a fun, interactive unit that allows the students to question and form opinions about various people and topics in history. It will also take advantage of their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that each student possesses.

I choose to do this unit because my students view the world through very limited experiences. Due to their economic situations, they can't travel and view the world. Some of my students have never been more than a few blocks from their home. This causes them to view the world through only the eyes of being young and black in America.

This unit is designed to develop pride in my students. It's the story of their neighborhood and their family members. Throughout this unit, they will notice several of the people studied have the last name, lived on the same block, and attended the same school as them. The unit will highlight the contributions of blacks to the city. It will focus on the economic foundation of the slave trade during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and how blacks in Richmond experienced a form of slavery much

different than what most slaves in the United States experienced. I want my students to finish this unit inspired by what they produce and what they can accomplish as black residents of the city.

### **School Demographics**

I teach at Armstrong High School in Richmond, VA. The majority of my students come from a low socioeconomic background and lives on public assistance. They face all the other problems that come along with this situation such as crime, lack of parental involvement, poverty, drug and sexual abuse. The majority of them come from home environments that are not supportive of learning. Therefore, it is important that I make my class as exciting and fun as possible to maximize student learning during the 90 minutes the students are in my class, semi-daily.

One advantage I have is that we are in Richmond, VA. I don't think that there is a more historic city in the United States. From its role as one of the largest slave trading ports in the world to being the capital of the Confederacy, and to being one of the leading areas in the country against the Brown V Board of Education case, Richmond has always been a leading American City. My students experience this history everyday on their way to school but do not understand how it has shaped and molded the very neighborhood in which they live. For example, six blocks down the street from the school is St. John's Baptist Church. This is the church where Patrick Henry made his famous "give me liberty or give me death" speech. There is also Lumpkin's Slave Jail, the second busiest slave trading facility in the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I want my students to actually understand and feel the history they pass on their way to school every day.

### **The Unit**

The Churchill and Jackson Ward areas of Richmond, VA were once called the Harlem of the South due to the vibrant African American culture, architecture, and music that once came out of the former capital of the Confederacy. These neighborhoods struggle with the problems of poverty, crime, and lack of upward mobility that plague most urban cities in the United States today. These two neighborhoods are also zoned for Armstrong High School, but most of my students are unfamiliar with that history.

The purpose of this unit is for the students to create a pictorial or video journal of the history of Richmond. The students will create a journal for the entire school year; however this unit will focus on the years 1800 – 1950. The journal will consist of images from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and an analysis of the image by the student. They will learn techniques of how to analyze and break down images to place them in proper historical context. In addition, the students will include current images that have the same meaning to them or of the same place or monument from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The

students will also learn modern research techniques to examine the history of their neighborhoods.

The primary focus will be on African American life in Richmond during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Students will examine and analyze photographs and paintings that depict life in Richmond during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The students will take several neighborhood field trips to places such as Lumpkin's Slave Jail and 17<sup>th</sup> Street Farmers Market which were once the most important trading port in the United States during early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lumpkin's Jail was the place where Solomon Northrop, the author and protagonist of *12 Years a Slave*, was held before he was sold into slavery in the Deep South. Students will also tour the Historic Churchill and Jackson Ward neighborhoods, and the Warehouse District to take digital pictures. In addition to visiting local history, students will examine famous artwork and photography from around the nation to understand the impact of the slave trade and agriculture industry on Richmond, Virginia.

The journal must include ten pictures and a one page explanation of the image. The journal must contain five new images not discussed in class. The journal can be created using Microsoft Word or Power point. The journal will demonstrate the skills necessary to analyze the pictures from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The journal will also include researched pictures of Jackson Ward during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century at the State Library of Virginia. Students will choose one picture from their research and they will compare and contrast it with a current picture of the same area taken during the tour. The journal will be a combination of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century skills combined with 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to maximize student retention. These journals will be made electronically using programs such as Microsoft word, Power point and Windows Movie Maker. They will be published to the school website and be used as a part of the school's 150 year celebration next school year.

## **Background**

### **Richmond, VA**

Exploration and colonization initiated worldwide commercial expansion as agricultural products were exchanged between the Americas and Europe. In time, colonization led to ideas of representative government and religious toleration that over several centuries would inspire similar transformations in other parts of the world. Virginia and the other Southern colonies were settled by people seeking economic opportunities. The early Virginia "cavaliers" were English nobility who received large land grants in eastern Virginia from the King of Britain. Poor English immigrants also came seeking better lives as small farmers or artisans and settled in the Shenandoah Valley or western Virginia, or as indentured servants who agreed to work on tobacco plantations for a period of time to pay for passage to the New World. Jamestown, established in 1607 by the Virginia Company of London as a business venture, was the first permanent English settlement in North America.

The growth of an agricultural economy based on large landholdings in the Southern colonies and in the Caribbean led to the introduction of slavery in the New World. The first Africans were brought against their will to Jamestown in 1619 to work on tobacco plantations. Virginia and the other Southern colonies developed economies in the eastern coastal lowlands based on large plantations that grew “cash crops” such as tobacco, rice, and indigo for export to Europe. The growth of a plantation-based agricultural economy in the hot, humid coastal lowlands of the Southern colonies required cheap labor on a large scale. Some of the labor needs, especially in Virginia, were met by indentured servants, who were often poor persons from England, Scotland, or Ireland who agreed to work on plantations for a period of time in return for their passage from Europe or relief from debts. Most plantation labor needs eventually came to be filled by the forcible importation of Africans. While a few Africans worked as indentured servants, earned their freedom, and lived as free citizens during the Colonial Era, over time larger and larger numbers of enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to the Southern colonies (the “Middle Passage”). The development of a slavery-based agricultural economy in the Southern colonies would lead to eventual conflict between the North and South and the American Civil War.

Richmond, Virginia was officially chartered as a city in 1782. It was originally settled by Jamestown settlers who had traveled up the James River until it was no longer navigable due to rocks in the river. The city was named Richmond because the view from high atop Churchill reminded them of Richmond, England. It was credited with being founded by William Byrd I and his son William Byrd II. They saw a fortune in the potential of the city of Richmond. The Byrd family saw the town “as having enormous potential for more prosaic development than gold and spices. They (Byrd family) correctly identified agriculture and industry as the ways to wring up a family fortune from the trackless woods and fields” (Richardson 2008). The fortunes they saw would not have been possible without African slaves to work the land.

The first Africans arrived in Jamestown aboard a Dutch ship in 1619. There has been much historical debate as to whether these Africans were indentured servants or slaves. Not long after their arrival, most historians agree that a permanent slave status was placed upon them. The first slaves were bought in to cultivate the tobacco fields of Jamestown. However, by 1680, slaves were responsible for almost all of the manual labor in the colony of Virginia.

William Byrd II made a lot of his fortune in the slave trading business. This continued as he settled in the city. Slave trading became one of Richmond’s largest businesses. At the dawn of the Civil War, slave trading in the city was estimated at “4 million dollars a year” (Richardson 2008). The only city in the United States that made more money off of slavery was New Orleans, Louisiana.

Richmond continued to grow as a major trading center throughout the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Given Richmond’s mid-Atlantic location and its number of railroad lines, roads, and waterways, it became a leading export center for all commerce, including slaves” (Richardson 2008).

#### Black Labor in Richmond before Emancipation

Slaves in Richmond did not work the plantations as most people think when they envision slavery. Richmond was an urban setting without huge tobacco and cotton fields. Slaves in Richmond performed all manual labor necessary to facilitate economic prosperity in the city. Seldon Richardson said “black hands wielded the tools, moved the cargo, and managed the transport that made Antebellum Richmond hum” (Richardson 2008). Slaves often worked in tobacco warehouses processing and cultivating tobacco to be sold. Slaves worked to build the Kanawha canal to help move regional goods through the city. Slaves also cleared landscapes and built the housing and structures within the city. Richardson said, “The commercial promise of the falls of the James (river) was realized with black labor driving the transformation from scenic river valley to industrial dynamo. From the earliest days of the city to emancipation, black laborers, to a large extent, laid the brick and granite foundation of the Richmond we know today (Richardson 2008)”.

Slaves in Richmond had a sense of freedom unknown by most slaves in rural Virginia and throughout other areas of the Antebellum South. Slaves were allowed to travel throughout the city and mix with free blacks. They established a black community that grew due to the wages earned through the profitable industries such as tobacco and iron.

Slaves often worked for their owners but were frequently rented out as hired labor by their owners. They earned a wage for their owners. In some cases, slaves were allowed to keep a portion of the wages they had earned as hired labor. Black “teamsters, boatmen, stevedores, carpenters, plasterers, shoemakers, and barbers controlled most of their work, earning money for themselves as well as their owners (Rachleff 1984)”.

Tobacco processing was the number one industry in the city. In tobacco warehouses, slaves and free blacks worked side by side to cultivate Virginia’s main cash crop. Most slaves and free blacks preferred to work in the tobacco industry because of the advantages the job presented to them. The tobacco industry was less cruel to blacks than other industries and “tobacco factory slaves exercised considerable freedom” (Rachleff 1984). The money helped grow Richmond’s black community. “They bought cash into the black community and therefore helped to support boardinghouse keepers, grocers, barbershops, tailors, seamstresses, shoemakers, churches, and beneficial societies” noted historian Peter Rachleff.

The second most profitable industry in Virginia was iron manufacturing. The Tredegar Iron factory on Brown's Island was the largest iron making factory in the South and was essential to the Confederate war machine during the Civil War. Iron work was much harder than tobacco factories and there was little room for skilled positions for blacks. Rachleff noted, "only a few slaves had skilled positions; most performed the hot, heavy, and repetitive tasks around the furnaces. They had little control over the pace, conditions, or content of their work; they felt pressured by the foremen, skilled white workers, and the demands of the iron industry" (Rachleff 1984). The one advantage of working in the iron factories was overwork bonuses given to them by factory owners which helped grow Richmond's black community.

The drawback to working in the iron factories was the control factory owners exercised over their life when not working. Black iron workers had to live in tenements owned by the factory. Their participation in religious and social activities in the black community was very limited by their work schedule and living conditions. This was probably due to the heavy demand of the iron industry.

#### Lumpkin's Jail and Shockoe Valley

As you drive through the downtown area of Richmond on Interstate 95, there is a large empty parking lot that looks like the perfect area for a downtown real estate redevelopment project. Mayor Dwight C Jones sees this as the ideal spot for a minor league baseball stadium that will revitalize the downtown area economically and physically. However, that parking lot covers up a very dark portion of Richmond's past. This area is the final resting place for hundreds, maybe even thousands of former Richmond residents and visitors. This is a burial ground for the numerous slaves who died at Lumpkin's Slave Jail and other slave trading facilities in the Shockoe valley of Richmond.

Lumpkin's Slave Jail was a myth to most historians until 2006 when the "Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods (ACORN), the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the city of Richmond and the Richmond Slave Trail Commission co-sponsored an archaeological survey on the site of Lumpkin's Jail, the most infamous of the slave trading facilities that lined the streets and alleys of Shockoe Valley" (Richardson 2008). This dig gave historians physical proof of the Lumpkin's Jail facility which made it eligible for historic preservation by the governor of Virginia. The historic designation of the "Burial Ground for Negroes" by the state saved the parking lot from being developed by Virginia Commonwealth University which owned the land at the time.

Lumpkin's Jail Complex, nicknamed by historian Charles H. Corey as the "devil's half-acre" is in the Shockoe Valley area of Richmond Virginia. This area is named after Shockoe creek which runs underneath the streets of the area and drains into the

James River today. There were several attempts by the early settlers of Richmond to develop this land into a vibrant part of the city but they failed due to “floods and freshets that would back up from the James River” (Richardson 2008). Therefore, this area became a trading ground, fresh with slave holding houses and small markets that would be inhabited by the lower class of whites and free blacks that lived in the city of Richmond. 19<sup>th</sup> century Richmond Historian Charles H. Corey described the jail in his 1895 book:

*Lumpkin's slave jail consisted of about half an acre of land near the center of the older portion (Shockoe Valley) of Richmond. The patch lay very low in a deep hollow or "bottom" as it might be called, through which a small stream of water ran very slowly. In reaching this place of sighs from Broad Street, one had to climb down the incline of a sandy embankment nearly one hundred feet. The descent was steep, irregular, and in places difficult. In approaching the place from the Franklin Street side, the descent was gradual and easy by a means of a narrow, crooked, untidy lane. Around the outer borders of the said half-acre was a fence, in some places ten or twelve feet in height. Inside of the fence, and very close to it, was a tall old brick building, which Lumpkin had used for his dwelling house. Nearby were other buildings, also of brick, where used to shelter the more peaceable of his slave-gangs that were brought to him from time to time to be sold. But in the corner of the plot was the chief object of interest-a low, rough, brick building known as the "slave jail." In this building Lumpkin was accustomed to imprison the disobedient and punish the refractory. The stout iron bars were still to be seen across one or more of the windows during my repeated visits to this place. In the rough floor, and about at the center of it, was the stout iron staple and the whipping ring.*

On top of the hill that overlooked Shockoe valley, sat hotels that provided resting places for the many travelers through the city. There also were huge homes and factories that provided the economic resources for the city. These symbols of economic prosperity hid the deep misery and suffering that went on down in the valley by the thousands of slaves who were separated from their families, beaten, murdered, and sold in the prosperous business of slave trading in the valley. Former slave W.L. Bost recalled his visit to the Shockoe Valley in the book “Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narrative”:

*The speculators stayed in the hotel and put the niggers in the quarters jes like droves of hogs. All through the night I could hear them mourning and prayin.' I didn't know the Lord would let people live who were so cruel. The gates were always locked and there was a guard on the outside to shoot anyone who tried to run away. Lord miss, them slaves look jes like turkeys runnin along in front of them horses. I remember when they put 'em on the block to sell 'em. The ones 'tween 18 and 30 always bring the most money.*

*The auctioneer he stand off at a distances and cry em off as they stand in the block. I can hear his voice as long as I live.*

The misery suffered in Lumpkin's Jail and the Shockoe valley was known by all blacks free and slave. Slaves from rural areas of Virginia dreaded a trip to Richmond because they knew it might be the last time they would ever see their loved ones or the environment that was familiar to them. There is a Southern phrase people speak today called "selling someone down the river" which means to make a decision without regards to a person's feelings. This phrase is rooted in the tradition of selling slaves down the Mississippi River to cotton and sugar plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana. This was especially frightening to slaves because the work in the "deep south" was much tougher than in Virginia and North Carolina. Many slaves in Virginia knew Richmond was the first stop on their way down the Mississippi River to harsher conditions.

The most famous story of how well known Richmond Slave Jails were known for their cruelty and destruction of the black family is that of Henry "Box" Brown. Brown was a slave from Louisa County who was sent to Richmond, Virginia in 1841. Knowing he would be sold like his wife and child before him, Brown put himself in a box and mailed himself to a minister in Pennsylvania who ensured his freedom. This story garnered him international fame and he became an outspoken abolitionist against the cruelties of slavery that existed in places like the Shockoe Valley of Richmond.

Another well-known story of the Richmond Slave Jails was told in Solomon Northrop's, *12 Years a Slave*. Northrop was a free black man from New York who was tricked and sold into slavery by a couple of white traveling salesmen (hustlers). After his escape, he wrote a book about his time as a slave. He recalled his time in the Richmond Slave Jails (Shockoe Valley) by saying:

*there were two small houses standing at opposite corners within the yard. These houses are usually found within slave yards, being used as rooms for the examination of human chattels by purchasers before concluding a bargain. Unsoundness in a slave, as well as in a horse, detracts materially from his value. If no warranty is given, a close examination is a matter of particular importance to the negro jockey.*

He goes on to describe the slaves for sale that day as described by a white worker at the jail.

*"Altogether we were a fair lot—a devilish good lot," he said, enforcing that opinion with more than one emphatic adjective not found in the Christian vocabulary. Thereupon we passed into the yard. Quite a number of slaves, as many as thirty I should say, were moving about, or sitting on benches under*



*the shed. They were all cleanly dressed—the men with hats, the women with handkerchiefs tied about their heads.*

Northrop recalls how he was almost put in the “Burial Ground for Negroes” off of Interstate 95 by mentioning his freedom. He recalled a reaction by an overseer when he told of his origin:

*"If ever I hear you say a word about New-York, or about your freedom, I will be the death of you—I will kill you; you may rely on that," he ejaculated fiercely. I doubt not he understood then better than I did, the danger and the penalty of selling a free man into slavery. He felt the necessity of closing my mouth against the crime he knew he was committing. Of course, my life would not have weighed a feather, in any emergency requiring such a sacrifice. Undoubtedly, he meant precisely what he said.*

Lumpkin's Jail was a large facility that housed many of the slaves before the slave auctions took place. Seldon Richardson notes “It was the epitome of a commodious and efficient mid-nineteenth-century Richmond business complex. It included the owner's house, a guest house for out of town customers and substantial dining facilities, including a barroom” (Richardson 2008). Slave traders on top of Churchill and visitors to the city would often look for the red flag hanging outside of Lumpkin's Jail which indicated a slave auction was about to start. They would rush down the hill to ensure they got first pick of the new crop of slaves for sale on that day.

The day of the slave auction was the day most slaves feared because slave auctions signaled the end of one part of your life combined with the anxieties and fears of what the new parts of your life would hold. Lonnie Bunch summed this up in the Slave Narratives, “Nothing symbolizes the fragility of slave life better than the slave auction. Hundreds of thousands of slaves throughout the south experienced the uncertainty, the humiliation, the fear, and psychological shock that accompanied the domestic slave trade” (Burch n.d.).

Lumpkin's Jail would remain the center of the Richmond Slave trade until Union troops emancipated the slaves in the city of Richmond in April 1865. Most of buildings in the Shockoe Valley would be replaced by warehouses or light industry during the period of Reconstruction. However, the slave jail would grow into a crucial element in the development of Richmond's Black middle class after the war. According to Virginia Union University History Professor, Dr. Richard Hylton, after the war, Dr. Nathan Colver had a hard time finding a place to set up a religious college to educate free blacks which would grow into Virginia Union University:

*“Dr. Nathaniel Colver an elderly, hard-bitten abolitionist who could not be intimidated by anyone....had a great deal of trouble even finding suitable accommodations to rent, and was close to despair when he had a chance meeting with Mrs. Mary Ann Lumpkin, from whom he was able to rent a patch of land and buildings at 15th & Franklin Streets known as Lumpkin’s Jail or “The Devil’s Half Acre”. Mrs. Lumpkin was a former whose late husband, Robert Lumpkin, had been a slave-dealer and had run the property as a holdingpen/punishment “breaking” center, which still contained whipping posts. Living with Dr. Colver on the premises of the new school, which was named Richmond Theological School for Freedmen”*

### Jackson Ward

The Jackson Ward area of Richmond is about ½ mile to the north of the Lumpkin’s Jail site. Jackson Ward is one of two neighborhoods recognized as National Historic Landmarks in the city of Richmond. It was once called the Black Wall Street of America due to its prominent and wealthy black middle class that lived in the neighborhood during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Jackson Ward neighborhood was originally owned by William Byrd II. His family is credited with settling and finding the city of Richmond. He sold plots of the land in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, “A diverse group of “Free Persons of Color,” European immigrants, American-born white artisans, and Richmond businessmen bought lots and built homes in these outlying subdivisions” (Service n.d.). They grew and developed the neighborhood living into a lower middle class neighborhood with Italian and German Immigrants dominating the neighborhood.

The neighborhood began to change at the dawn of the civil war as row houses and townhomes began to dominate the landscape. The architecture of Jackson ward was like no other city in the South. The National Park Service reports:

*Brick buildings interspersed with a number of frame buildings characterize Jackson Ward architecture of the mid-19th century. A number of Greek Revival town houses and row houses date to the 1840s and 1850s. These buildings have porches with round or square columns (typically one bay in width), English basements, gable roofs, and stepped parapets.*

This gave Jackson Ward a style that became attractive to all newly emancipated black residents of the city after the Civil War.

The new black residents of Jackson Ward changed the landscape and types of houses in the area. The National Park service reported:

*After the Civil War the Italianate and Second Empire styles came into and remained in vogue until the end of the 19th century. Both styles feature heavily bracketed cornices. The styles can be differentiated because Italianate houses have sloped roofs or slightly pitched gable roofs and the Second Empire style is characterized by “false” (front façade only) mansard roofs with or without dormers. The porches of Italianate and Second Empire style houses are of particular interest. Throughout the district are many wooden porches with various combinations of turned posts, turned or sawn balusters, and sawn brackets.*

The neighborhood began to change as black lower class residents grew economically into middle and upper middle class residents. The family unit was the key to black economic prosperity in a segregated city after the civil war. The extended families worked together to pool their resources and provided a network that allowed the money to stay in the community. Historian Peter Rachleff noted, “The extended family, the church, and the rapidly growing network of secret societies provided institutions by which new residents integrated themselves into the community” (Rachleff 1984).

The demographics of the neighborhood began to change as blacks in Jackson Ward earned more and more money which they kept in the community. Italian and German immigrants began to move out as blacks gained more power. As more blacks moved in, the architecture of the neighborhood began to change as well. The National Park Service reports that

*Jackson Ward has a large collection of historic cast iron porches that constitute some of Richmond’s great architectural treasures. Richmond cast iron porches feature decorative railings, slender columns, and bands ornamented with trellis, floral, and vine patterns. These highly ornamented elements create porches with the quality of a garden pavilion. They are for the most part the products of Richmond foundries that provided the same patterns to a number of different builders and property owners. Clay Street and the 100 block of East Leigh Street have the largest concentration of cast iron porches in Richmond.*

The new economic power of blacks in the neighborhood was represented by one great historic figure, Maggie Lena Walker. Walker was the first female, of any race, to charter and be named as President of a bank in America. She founded the St. Luke Penny Bank, which became the center of black economic activity in the neighborhood. Her bank issued over 625 mortgages to blacks which made up the core of the Jackson Ward area.

The economic power in the neighborhood allowed blacks to be in complete control of everything in the neighborhood. They attracted teachers from nearby Virginia Union University, as well as prominent doctors and lawyers who were the heart of the middle class in Richmond, Virginia. This economic power also attracted black architects from around the country who wanted to leave a lasting impression on the look and feel of the Jackson Ward area.

The most famous of these architects was Charles Thaddeus Russell. Russell, unlike most of the other architects in the area, grew up in the neighborhood. He was the first black person to maintain an architectural practice in Richmond, Virginia. He designed projects worth as much as 1 million dollars by 1930. He was commissioned by Maggie Walker to design the St. Luke Penny Bank on the corners of 1<sup>st</sup> and Marshall in Jackson Ward. This building became the key point of the community, recognized by Richmonders, black and white, as a symbol of black economic power. Seldon Richardson wrote about this bank. He said the bank was

*“a three story building distinguished by a pair of tall, arched windows on each side that illuminated the banking floor and broke the line of a heavy cornice that ran around the building above the first floor windows. A corner entrance was visible from both directions—a popular design during the period for a commercial building in a busy urban setting....The New St Luke building was welcomed as a sign of prosperity and stability in Richmond’s African-American community.”*

The building is now demolished but its presence looms large in the city of Richmond as a landmark. Blacks in the city still refer to the building there today as the St. Luke Bank spot. My grandfather, Elmore Robinson, would always point to that spot as we drove past growing up as “the most important and powerful spot for black people” in the city of Richmond.

After Russell designed the St. Luke Bank, he was commissioned to design other office buildings, churches, civic halls, and homes in the Jackson Ward area. Russell was limited in his design by segregation laws and boundaries that did not allow him to take full advantage of space in the downtown/Jackson Ward area of the city. The limited spaces allowed Russell to change the urban building design to create multi-use facilities, a style that would be copied by architects, black and white all over the United States. Seldon Richardson noted:

*This type of design maximized the use of the small city lots in desirable locations in and around Jackson Ward. Russell’s multi-use commercial buildings created opportunities for generating income from ground-floor businesses, suites of offices above and often a meeting hall on an upper floor. An early example of this building type from Russell is in the 1910 Johnson’s*

*Hall at 10 East Leigh Street, a combination Masonic Lodge, funeral parlor, and auditorium. This type of building, believed to be a Richmond innovation, based on the model of the 1895 Reformers Hall at 604-608 North Second Street was copied extensively across the country. Russell and his older colleague Lankford, designed these multipurpose buildings for a variety of clients.*

Buildings like these contributed to the growth of black economic pride in the community. Most of these buildings were built by contractors who only employed black workers who lived in the neighborhood and surrounding areas. Richardson notes, ‘the use of a black architect and black contractors was consistent with the spirit of self sufficiency in the neighborhood’ (Richardson 2008).

One of the most prominent contractors in the area was a construction company owned by Maggie Walker’s husband, Armstead Walker. His company was known for finishing jobs efficiently and on time. His company was the envy of all contracting companies in the city. His company built several of the landmarks that gave Jackson Ward its personality. His company built the First Battalion, Virginia Volunteers Armory at 122 West Leigh Street, which is the oldest armory still standing in the state of Virginia. It was the first armory in the state to serve predominately black citizens. The building has a very unique look. “The towers of this castle like building have enlivened the Jackson War skyline sine it was constructed in 1895 by the city of Richmond” (Richardson 2008). While building this armory, Walker’s company faced complaints from the all-white bricklayers union. The issue went to Richmond city council but lobbying from Jackson Ward’s community of bankers, lawyers, and educators, most notably the *Richmond Planet*’s (all black newspaper) editor, John Mitchell, allowed Walker’s company to complete the job. This was an example of the power of the black people of Jackson Ward.

The armory served multiple uses for the city of Richmond over the years and has become a symbol of the black power that dominated the Jackson Ward neighborhood. It was home to black soldiers during the Spanish-American War and World Wars I and II. The building was city property and was used during peace times as a school. It was home to my current school Armstrong High as well as Graves Middle School. During the 1980’s it was used and a Black History Cultural Center until a second floor fire damaged the roof. It was restored by the National Park Service in 2003. Richardson noted:

*The building has enormous significance for African American history in Richmond and for Virginia history in general. It is the oldest armory still standing in the commonwealth and a unique example of the architectural style that has all but disappeared from the American city. It is hoped that the sturdy brick walls erected by black hands over a hundred years ago will soon*

*be reinforced and the beautifully lighted armory, glowing in magnificent splendor will again grace Jackson Ward as it did in 1895.*

Some of the most famous buildings in Jackson Ward were the churches built during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Churches have always been the leaders of the black community since emancipation and Jackson Ward had several churches that contributed to the black power in the neighborhood. The National Park Service reports:

*African American churches were central to the life of Jackson Ward. The oldest church in the district is the twin-towered Italianate style Third Street Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church dating from 1857 at 614 North 3rd Street. The second oldest building is Ebenezer Baptist Church, constructed in 1858 at 214 West Leigh Street. Population growth and the separation of African Americans from white congregations caused a dramatic increase in the number of black congregations in Jackson Ward after the Civil War. These congregations built or acquired a number of churches in the neighborhood for their use. Three congregations still occupy their buildings from the late 19th century: Sharon Baptist Church of 1884 at 18 East Leigh Street, Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church constructed in 1884 and expanded in 1925 at 14 West Duval Street, and Hood Temple AME Zion Church at 20 West Clay Street. Sixth Mount Zion, which is renowned as the church of the Reverend John Jasper, has a museum, the Jasper Room, dating from 1925.*

The news of Jackson Ward's prosperity was spread around the world by the many visitors who stayed in the many hotels and supported the many theaters and entertainment venues in the Jackson Ward area. Segregation forced many black entertainers to perform and stay in the Jackson Ward area because they were not allowed to stay and in the whites only hotels and theaters along broad street. These theaters and hotels ran up and down 2<sup>nd</sup> street. The most famous of these theaters was the Hippodrome Theater at 528 North Street. "The building recalls the time when Jackson Ward, particularly 2nd Street, was a nationally known black entertainment district" (Service n.d.). World famous musician and tap dancer, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, a Jackson Ward resident, regularly performed at this theater and invited numerous other black entertainers to visit the city. The entertainment available in the city gave it the knick name, "the Harlem of the South". This history is celebrated every 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in October with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street festival, a weekend long celebration that highlights the black history and power of the Jackson Ward neighborhood and its residents. It annually attracts more than 30,000 residents and visitors to the city. This festival has been attended by governors, mayors, and even President Bill Clinton. It is considered a major stop for any political candidate running for state, local, and national office.

The financial power of the Jackson Ward neighborhood was destroyed by the building of Interstate 95 during the 1950's. Older black residents of the city believe this was done intentionally by segregationists in response to the Brown vs. Board of Education Ruling in 1954. They believe this was an effort by Senator Harry Byrd (descendant of the founders of the city) to assert white power in the face of changing political times.

### **Strategies**

The students at my school struggle with analyzing and reading primary sources in History. This is due to the lack of reading skills that arises with the achievement gap between students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds. The students also have very limited experiences due to their lack of exposure to varying ideas and places. Most stories in textbooks and primary documents are foreign to them which cause their interest level to be almost nonexistent.

The students in my class learn a lot more when they are engaged and can use the skills that they possess. The most important skill they have is their emotional understanding of life and the world in which they live. My students have a great ability to understand situations by analyzing people and their actions. My goal is to use this skill to analyze images, sketches, portraits, and photographs while providing the proper historical context to create higher retention of knowledge. Also, I want the students to be able to operate on the higher levels of thinking according to Bloom's Taxonomy.

The primary focus of analysis will be images, sketches, portraits, and photographs that tell the history of black people in America with a very specific focus on Richmond, Virginia. The students will read primary sources after analyzing images to help create higher retention. They will also read these documents to place the images in the proper historical context. The images create a visual picture that will promote deeper understanding of the primary sources.

The students will use a graphic organizer to analyze images. I created this graphic organizer to set a standard for the level of thinking I want the students to demonstrate. The graphic organizer is called P.A.P.S.I. (People, Actions, Place, Source, and Image Summary). The acronym focuses on the 4 main categories to examine to create a summary of the image.

The first letter in the acronym P stands for people. The student will analyze the people in the image and form opinions on them by answering several basic questions. These questions are: Who is in the picture? What are their unique physical characteristics? (clothing, size, gender, race) What do these characteristics say about

the persons in picture? Who is in charge? What is power based on? Who gives that person or group power?

The second letter in the acronym A stands for Action. The student will analyze the actions taking place in the image and form opinions on them by answering several basic questions. These questions are: What is happening in the picture? What relationships/interactions are taking place? How do people communicate? What do What social structures of society are being represented by the actions in the picture? (race, class, gender, family relations) Are there social classes? How do they live? Are there inequalities? How is social structure being altered or challenged in this picture? Did your reading reveal any social or cultural norms?

The third letter in the acronym P stands for Place. The student will analyze the physical geography in the image and form opinions on them by answering several basic questions. These questions are: Where is the picture taking place? Where do you think the picture takes place? What are the unique physical characteristics? (natural vs human structures) What do the physical characteristics say about society? What role does geography play in the picture?

The fourth letter in the acronym S stands for Source. The student will analyze the origin of the image by examining the creator of the image and form opinions on them by answering several basic questions. These questions are: Who was the intended audience? When was the document created or circulated? Who created the document? and how do you know? What position or title did he or she hold? And how do you know? What biases might he or she have? And how can these biases influence the document? Whose voice is not represented in the document? Why do you think that voice was left out?

The last letter in the acronym I stand for Image Summary. The student will create a summary of the image by using the questions answered to form a final complete thought of the image. The questions answered in the final summary are: Why do you think this image was created? What specific evidence in the image helps you know why it was created? What does the image convey about life in the United States at the time it was created? What questions does the image raise? What questions do u have for the author of this image? Where would you find more information on this image?

This unit will take five days of class stretched over a two month period. The students will create a ten page visual journey of black life in Richmond, Virginia in the Churchill neighborhood throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Each entry in the journal will have a picture as well as a page summary of image and how it relates to black life in Richmond in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The students will be allowed to up to five of the images used in class but they must also find or create five new images of their own.

### **Lesson Plans**



### VUS.2.3

On the day one of this unit, students will examine the origins of slavery in the United States. This lesson will take one day of 90 minute classes on a block schedule. In cooperative groups, students will generate ten facts about the origins of slavery from their background and experiences with studying the subject. Each group will post their list in the front of the class. Students will take Cornell notes on the origins of slavery in the United States and answer the essential questions from the Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework:

1. Why did Europeans settle in the English colonies?
2. How did their motivations influence their settlement patterns and colony structures?
3. In what ways did the cultures of Europe, Africa, and the Americas interact?
4. What were the consequences of the interactions of European, African, and American cultures?
5. How did the economic activity and political institutions of the three colonial regions reflect the resources and/or the European origins of their settlers?
6. Why was slavery introduced into the colonies?
7. How did the institution of slavery influence European and African life in the colonies?

After the Cornell notes, I will lead the class in a discussion of image analysis and how images can tell the stories of history. I will then lead them through an analysis of JMW Turner's *The Slave Ship* (1840, Boston Museum of Fine Arts) answering 75% of the questions. As a class, students will fill out an individual graphic organizer as they answer the questions along with me. I will lead a review of the graphic organizer with the students to ensure they are grasping the concepts of the graphic organizer.

I will then lead another analysis of the image, *Description of a Slave Ship*, (1789, woodcut, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem MA) answering only 25-50% of the questions on the graphic organizer. The purpose of answering fewer questions is to promote student independence and ownership of their learning. It also allows me to identify students who are having trouble grasping the concepts. Next, I will allow the students to do their own analysis of James Gillray's *Barbarities in the West Indies, 1791* (etching with hand-coloring, Yale University Library) I will walk around the class to assist students who are having difficulty with the concepts of the graphic organizer.

The summary of the lesson will have the students grab their list of 10 facts about slavery from the front of the class. They will compare their list with the information learned in class today.

## VUS.6,7

The second and third day of the unit will occur consecutively 1 month later in two 90 minute class periods. Students will take Cornell notes on the life of slaves and the abolitionist movement in the Antebellum United States and how those issues led to the Civil War. The students will answer the following questions from the Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework:

1. What factors influenced American westward movement?
2. What issues divided America in the first half of the nineteenth century?
3. What were the causes of the Civil War?

After the notes, each student will be assigned one of the following images to analyze on the graphic organizer. The images will be:

1. *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences*, Samuel Jennings
2. *Negro Life in the South*, Eastman Johnson
3. *Confidence and Admiration*, Eastman Johnson
4. *Odd Fellows Hall*, Samuel Smith Kilburn
5. *Am I Not a Man?*, Josiah Wedgwood & William Hackwood
6. *The Driver's Whip* The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, Westbromich, Wednesbury Walsall, and their Respective Neighbourhoods, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, Established April 8, 1825
7. *The Negro Mother's Appeal*,
8. *Auction at Richmond*, George Bourne
9. *Jail in Washington*, American Anti-slavery Society
10. *Selling a Mother from Her Child*, American Anti-slavery Society
11. *Illustration from Henry Bibb*, Narrative of the Life Adventures of Henry Bibb
12. *Negro Life in the Slave States of America*, Casey's Great Appeal
13. *The Hunted Slaves*, Richard Ansdell
14. *The Price of Blood*, Thomas Satterwhite Noble
15. *Lumpkin's Jail*, Charles Henry Corey
16. *Franklin and Armfield's Slave Market*, American Anti-slavery Society
17. *Slave Pen*, Alexander, VA, Library of Congress
18. *The Power of Music*, William Sydney Mount
19. *The Modern Madea* – The story of Margaret Garner, Anonymous
20. *Farmer's Nooning*, William Sydney Mount
21. *Eliza Tells Tom He is Sold*, Hammatt Billings
22. *Emancipation Relief for the Gutenberg Monument*, David d'Angers
23. *John Brown led to Execution*, Thomas Satterfield White
24. *John Brown on his way to Execution*, Louis Ransome
25. *Last Moments of John Brown*, Thomas Hovenden
26. *Emancipation Group*, George Bissell

Each student will present their image to the classroom with a thorough explanation of the picture by placing it in its proper historical context. Each student in the class will receive extra credit points if they comment on the images of the other students and discover something not explained by the student.

On the third day of the lesson, the students will take a field trip to Lumpkin's Slave Jail. The students will be given a teacher led tour of the Lumpkin's Jail Site. The students will read aloud various excerpts from the slave narratives describing life at Lumpkin's Jail site. The students will be provided a sketch pad to create a visual image of the slave jail based on the descriptions read aloud. The students will also be divided into cooperative groups to recreate the famous painting, *Slaves Waiting for Sale*, by Eyre Crowe. I will take a digital picture of each group that will be included in their individual journals.

#### VUS.8

The fourth and fifth days of the lesson will occur two weeks later. Students will analyze black life in Richmond after Emancipation. The students will take Cornell Notes on the Reconstruction and the struggle for full emancipation by blacks in Richmond. The students will answer the following essential questions from the Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework:

1. What were the consequences of the war and Reconstruction?
2. How did the Civil War affect African Americans and the common soldier?
3. How did race relations in the South change after Reconstruction, and what was the African American response?

The students will be put in cooperative learning groups and given images to analyze (hopefully by this point, the students do not need to use the graphic organizers). They will be given the following images:

1. *Darkies Day at the Fair*, Frederick Opper
2. *Slavery is Dead*, Thomas Nast
3. *The Accused*, Joseph Decker
4. *Dandy Jim from Caroline*, Anonymous
5. *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, Winslow Homer

Each group will present their image to the classroom explaining in detail the meaning and placing the image in the proper historical context.

After the presentations, the students will spend the rest of day four and all of day five in the Media Center researching images for their pictorial journey. The journal must include ten pictures and a one page explanation of the image. The journal must

contain five new images not discussed in class. The journal can be created using Microsoft Word or Power point.

The sixth day of the lesson will involve the students taking an hour long bus/walking tour through the Jackson Ward neighborhood. The tour will be led by myself and will travel through 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> streets, as well as Main, Marshall, Leigh, and Broad streets that make up the Jackson Ward neighborhood. Along the tour, I will acknowledge the architectural structures and buildings in the neighborhood built by black architects. The main buildings of focus will be the Maggie Walker House, 1<sup>st</sup> and Marshall (former home to St. Luke Penny Bank), the First Battalion Virginia Volunteers Armory at 122 West Leigh Street and the Hippodrome Theater. The students will take digital pictures of the buildings that are still standing.

The seventh (last) day will involve a researched based field trip to the State Library of Virginia. Students will research pictures of Jackson Ward during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century at the State Library of Virginia. Students will choose one picture from their research and they will compare and contrast it with a current picture of the same area taken during the tour. They will use the same analytical tools from the graphic organizer. Students will write a one page summary of the pictures. The summary will include a description of each picture and will answer the following questions: How are these pictures representative of the time period it was taken? What major changes (landscape, neighborhood) took place in between the time of the pictures? What are the architectural patterns displayed in the picture and how do they represent the values or beliefs of the time period? What do the pictures say about the power of blacks in the city of Richmond? This information will be displayed as a part of their photo journal. The journal can be created using Microsoft Word or Power point. The students will print them out and create a binded book using a binding machine. It will be due two weeks after the State Library Field Trip.

## **Appendix**

### **Virginia/United States History Standards of Learning Objectives**

**Standard VUS.2 Knowledge -** The student will describe how early European exploration and colonization resulted in cultural interactions among Europeans, Africans, and American Indians.

#### **Standard VUS.2 Skills**

- Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data to increase understanding of events and life in the United States. (VUS.1a)

- Formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation. (VUS.1c)
- Develop perspectives of time and place. (VUS.1d)

### **Standard VUS.3 Knowledge**

**The student will describe how the values and institutions of European economic and political life took root in the colonies and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas.**

### **Standard VUS.3 Skills**

- Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data to increase understanding of events and life in the United States. (VUS.1a)
- Formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation. (VUS.1c)
- Develop perspectives of time and place. (VUS.1d)
- Apply geographic skills and reference sources to understand how relationships between humans and their environment have changed over time. (VUS.1g)
- Identify the costs and benefits of specific choices made, including the consequences, both intended and unintended, of the decisions and how people and nations responded to positive and negative incentives. (VUS.1i)

### **Standard VUS.6e Knowledge**

**The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major events from the last decade of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century by**

- e) **describing the cultural, economic, and political issues that divided the nation, including tariffs, slavery, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, and the role of the states in the Union.**

### **Standard VUS.6e Skills**

- Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data to increase understanding of events and life in the United States. (VUS.1a)
- Formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation. (VUS.1c)
- Develop perspectives of time and place. (VUS.1d)
- Interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and other documents. (VUS.1h)

### **Standard VUS.7a,d,&e**

**The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Civil War and Reconstruction Era and their importance as major turning points in American history by**

- a) **evaluating the multiple causes of the Civil War, including the role of the institution of slavery as a principal cause of the conflict.**
- d) **examining the political and economic impact of the war and Reconstruction, including the adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.**
- e) **examining the social impact of the war on African Americans, the common soldier, and the home front, with emphasis on Virginia.**

#### Standard VUS.7a,d,&e

- Formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation. (VUS.1c)
- Develop perspectives of time and place. (VUS.1d)
- Apply geographic skills and reference sources to understand how relationships between humans and their environment have changed over time. (VUS.1g)
- Interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and other documents. (VUS.1h)

#### Standard VUS.8

**The student will demonstrate knowledge of how the nation grew and changed from the end of Reconstruction through the early twentieth century by**

- c) **analyzing prejudice and discrimination during this time period, with emphasis on “Jim Crow” and the responses of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.**

#### Standard VUS.8

- Formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation. (VUS.1c)
- Develop perspectives of time and place. (VUS.1d)
- Interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and other documents. (VUS.1h)

#### Images from Lesson

#### VUS.2,3

1. *Description of a Slave Ship*, Unknown Artist
2. *The Slave Ship*, J.F.W. Turner, woodcut, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem MA
3. *Slavery in the West Indies*, George Cruikshank, Library of Congress
4. *The Auction Sale*, Hammatt Billings, Illustration from Uncle Tom’s Cabin
5. *An American Slave Market*, Taylor, Unknown
6. *Slave Auction*, Lefevre James Cranstone, Unknown
7. *Barbarities in the West Indies*, James Gillra, etching with hand-coloring, Yale University Library
8. *Slave Market*, Artist Unknown

9. *The Slave Trade*, Francois-Auguste Biard, Oil, Wilberforce House, Kingston-Upon-Hull, England

#### **VUS.6**

27. *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences*, Samuel Jennings, Oil on Canvas, The Library Company of Philadelphia
28. *Negro Life in the South*, Eastman Johnson, Oil, New York Historical Society
29. *Confidence and Admiration*, Eastman Johnson, Oil, New York Historical Society
30. *Slaves Waiting For Sale*, Eyre Crowe, Oil, Private Collection
31. *Testing Tobacco*, Richmond, Virginia, Eyre Crowe, sketch, With Thackery in America
32. *Odd Fellows Hall*, Samuel Smith Kilburn, Unknown
33. *Am I Not a Man?*, Josiah Wedgwood & William Hackwood, Unknown
34. *The Driver's Whip*, The Third Report of the Female Society for Birmingham, Westbromich, Wednesbury Walsall, and their Respective Neighbourhoods, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, Established April 8, 1825
35. *The Negro Mother's Appeal*, Unknown
36. *Auction at Richmond*, George Bourne, Unknown
37. *Jail in Washington*, American Anti-slavery Society
38. *Selling a Mother from Her Child*, American Anti-slavery Society
39. *Illustration from Henry Bibb*, Narrative of the Life Adventures of Henry Bibb
40. *Negro Life in the Slave States of America*, Casey's Great Appeal
41. *The Hunted Slaves*, Richard Ansdell, Known
42. *The Price of Blood*, Thomas Satterwhite Noble, Oil, Morris Museum of Art - Augusta
43. *Lumpkin's Jail*, Charles Henry Corey, sketch, A History of Richmond Theological Seminary
44. *Franklin and Armfield's Slave Market*, American Anti-slavery Society
45. *Slave Pen*, Alexander, VA, Library of Congress
46. *The Power of Music*, William Sydney Mount, Unknown
47. *The Modern Madea* – The story of Margaret Garner, Anonymous
48. *Farmer's Noonning*, William Sydney Mount, Unknown

#### **VUS.7**

1. *Eliza Tells Tom He is Sold*, Hammatt Billings, Illustration from Uncle Tom's Cabin
2. *John Brown led to Execution*, Thomas Satterfield White, Oil, New York Historical Society
3. *John Brown on his way to Execution*, Louis Ransome, Oil, New York Historical Society
4. *Last Moments of John Brown*, Thomas Hovenden, Oil, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco

5. *Emancipation Group*, George Bissell, Unknown

## **VUS.8**

1. *Darkies Day at the Fair*, Frederick Opper, Newspaper Cartoon, Library of Congress
2. *Slavery is Dead*, Thomas Nast, Illustration, Harper's Weekly
3. *The Accused*, Joseph Decker, Oil, Private Collection
4. *Dandy Jim from Caroline*, Anonymous, Illustration Cover Daniel Decatur Emmett Song
5. *Sunday Morning in Virginia*, Winslow Homer, Unknown

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